

12.02.21 Majority/Minority Mtg. Comments

Timestamp	Meeting Date	Agenda Item	First and Last Name	Zip Code	Representing	Comments
12/2/2021 12:43:51	Dec. 2, 2021	IV. Arizona State Legislature Leaders Reports	Nelson Morgan	85054	Self	<p>Chair Neuberg asked the Democratic leaders how they would like to handle promoting competitive districts when there will likely be 8 or 9 VRA districts that will be overwhelmingly voting for Democrats. I agree that this is (at least partly) a mathematical problem, but in fact there is (at least partly) a mathematical solution. First, by the current 7% criterion, there are 6 competitive legislative districts in the current draft map. But with only 8 or so districts that, due to VRA, are pretty safe D, if this was matched by 8 or so that were safe R, there would still be 14 that could be competitive. I say this knowing that, as you have commented, it is not explicitly your job to provide partisan balance statewide, which is not competitiveness per se. That being said, if one accepts that having so many d-favoring voters put into the VRA districts there will necessarily be (in a purple state) many other parts of the state that will be predominantly Republican. But mathematically, one would expect that there should be many more opportunities to make districts competitive despite VRA than the 6 we have now.</p> <p>I understand that this is grossly understating the difficulty of considering all 6 constitutional criteria. My only point here was that in principle, we could have many more competitive districts than we are showing in the current draft map.</p> <p>The other, related point I'd like to make, is that it may be the case that the VRA districts may have been drawn to include more minority voters than are actually needed for them to be able to elect representatives of their choice. As I wrote in an Arizona Mirror article that was published this week, the Democratic-favoring districts have a preponderance of huge vote shares, which could be viewed as packing. This is also true for some Republican - favoring districts, but it is more of an issue for the former. As I noted in that article, backing off from some of that packing could free up voters for some more competitive districts.</p>

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12/2/2021 12:58:49	Dec. 2, 2021	IV.Arizona State Legislature Leaders Reports or Memorial submissions related to Draft Maps	William Bowlus-Root	85365	Myself	<p>Regarding competitiveness of districts... A comment was made that linked the competitiveness criteria with 'parity in the legislature'. That parity in the legislature is NOT the goal of creating competitive districts.</p> <p>Whether, by creating districts that are internally competitive, parity is achieved, then be that as it may. Whatever the relative number of members of each party wind up in the legislature would be a clear expression of the will of the people</p> <p>The voters wanted the commission to create competitive districts - where, within any given district, the voters of any party will have a reasonable chance of electing a candidate who reflects their views and who they feel will provide the kinds of policies and programs that will address issues facing the district.</p> <p>In 'safe' districts, this does not happen. The outcome of an election is clear from the start, so there is little (if any) need for candidates to come up with policies or programs much less to even know about the issues facing the district. No need to take chances by coming up with new programs, even those that benefit the majority. Just keep a lid on things. So long as they wear the badge of the majority party and stay within the graces of the party bosses by toeing the party line, there is no incentive for them to listen to the voters at all. Certainly not the minority voters; addressing their concerns would be traitorous. As a result, government fails to deliver the kinds of programs that make a difference in the prosperity of a community and the people who live, work, and play there. The people become disinterested in and disenchanted with government because it doesn't DO anything. They stop voting, either because they're in the majority and know the election will go their way whether they vote or not, or because they're in the minority and know that even if they do vote the outcome is not in question.</p> <p>To flourish, democracy requires the active participation of the populace. They must make their views known and they must express their preferences for potential solutions to the problems they face. If they are disengaged, as they become if they live in a safe district, then democracy withers. In a competitive district, democracy is energized by the will of the people.</p> <p>It's always easier if districts are safe. The political parties don't need to do much for their leadership to control the power of the legislature. Of course they prefer it that way. But the public could see through this power play and invested it's future in the creation of the Independent Redistricting Commission and gave it the mission to create "fair and competitive" districts, NOT the safe districts that the politicians would prefer.</p> <p>William Bowlus-Root A concerned citizen</p>

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12/2/2021 13:04:10	Dec. 2, 2021	IV. Arizona State Legislature Leaders Reports	Nelson Morgan	85054	Self	I was surprised to hear Speaker Bowers conflating partisan balance with competitiveness. They are not the same. His experience of the difficulty of operating in a closely balanced legislative chamber is an entirely different thing as having a district where politicians must appeal to the middle and where the entire competition is really in the primary. I understand that it is much easier to operate in the legislature if your side has a huge majority ...
12/2/2021 13:14:54	Dec. 2, 2021	Call for public comments for December 4 meeting. The website isn't accepting comments for that meeting.	Michael Bruwer	85719	myself	I request that District 17 include the compact and contiguous areas from Marana to the Foothills, including Oro Valley and Casas Adobes, leaving Vail, the Houghton Corridor, and Tanque Verde in the eastern legislative districts. The IRC criteria prohibit partisan gerrymandering. I also request that the contiguous communities of interest in downtown Tucson, University of Arizona, and Fourth Avenue remain in CD7. I request that CD7 include areas south of Broadway, so that Latinos maintain voting strength in their communities of interest.

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12/2/2021 13:24:18	Dec. 2, 2021	IV.Arizona State Legislature Leaders Reports or Memorial submissions related to Draft Maps	William Bowlus-Root	85365	Myself	<p>Speaker Bowers comments are off target. His assertion that competitiveness within districts makes the job of enacting legislation difficult is missing an important point about democracy. The founders built the form and process of government specifically to BE DIFFICULT. They knew that partisan politics could corrupt the vitality of the democratic process, and so they made it difficult on purpose. That way you have to listen to the people.</p> <p>What's more disturbing is that his view of our democracy does not afford a way for the will of the people to be heard. He would rather that the commission create districts that are safe for a party and that will reign for long periods of time (certainly longer than the 10 years the boundaries set by the current commission will last). That way, it seems, the agenda (the party's agenda, not the people's) that will be implemented will be more effective because it will last longer. It's just easier that way. And why wouldn't that be more attractive than all this debate and harangue. No need for all messiness that to get things DONE.</p> <p>Speaker Bowers also states that if districts are competitive any legislative action will leave the voters greatly dissatisfied. But isn't that always the case? Half the people will be happy and the other half will not. That is inevitable whether the districts are competitive or safe.</p> <p>If he truly believes that competitiveness causes legislators to be inflexible because they will be roundly punished by their party for straying from the party line, then he need look no further than himself for a solution. He's the speaker. How many times has he punished the members of his own party for voting the will of the people instead of the will of the party?</p> <p>This is a very dark and pessimistic view of democracy. It's a view that seems to presume autocracy is the only eventual outcome.</p> <p>Hearing it articulated this way makes causes of the highly polarized nature of our politics very plain.</p> <p>The commission has the ability to prove this view is wrong. I challenge the commission to create as many competitive districts as possible. Give the people a chance to have their voices heard over the din of the parties'. We'll see whether or not that's has a better result.</p> <p>William Bowlus-Root A concerned citizen</p>